

## THE FRENCH ADMINISTRATION OF INDO-CHINA

s had begged Paris to let him close Tonkin to foreign aggression, promising that it would cost nothing if he were given a free hand, psychological defeatism in France, since the war of 1870, made the government chary of even the display of force. In addition, Hue had at ambassadors directly to Paris to plead the return of Cochin-China, and this also served as a check on the Admiral. Dupre was beginning to be discouraged when he heard of Dupuis<sup>3</sup> successful navigation of the Red River, but the Metropole, with its congenital fear of complications, at once formally ordered him to abstain from armed intervention there. Dupre was, however, determined to do so, and to use Dupuis as the opening wedge. In looking out for a leader for this delicate mission, Dupre's first choice was Francis Gamier. Gander's career had been amazingly full for so young an officer; he had participated in the Chinese campaigns, and he had conceived the 5 Mekong exploratory expedition, although he had been thought too young to be given its command. When Lagree's death left him in charge of it, he gave a political character to what had hitherto been purely a scientific and commercial expedition. Returning afterwards to Indochina, he distinguished himself during the siege and the Commune, and when he came back to Indochina again in the Far East, he was planning an expedition into Yunnan from Shanghai, when he received an urgent message from Dupre asking him to return to Saigon for an important piece of work nothing less than the conquest of Tonkin. When Gamier and Dupre talked over the situation, they found themselves only in partial agreement. Gamier wanted no armed expedition: he thought that Tonkin was tired enough of Hue's administration.

tion to submit spontaneously to him. Both agreed,  
 however, as to  
 > importance of opening the Red River to  
 commerce. Finally Gamier  
 •eed to take two hundred French soldiers and a few  
 Annamites, and  
 sail at once for Hanoi. There is ample proof that it  
 was the force  
 circumstances which gave a military turn to the  
 expedition, and  
 tiast Garnier's expressed wishes.  
 The open distrust of the officials at Hanoi was  
 shown by their  
 (itary preparations and a stream of aggressive  
 proclamations. Gamier  
 >lied with an ultimatum, threatening to storm the  
 citadel if the town  
 re not immediately disarmed and the Red River  
 opened to com-  
 merce—and incidentally to Dupuis, Their failure to  
 reply brought  
 wit an amazingly rapid capture of the Hanoi fort  
 without the loss  
 a single French soldier. Equally swift successes  
 were repeated